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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended): A method in a node within network computing system for selecting a master subnet manager, wherein the node is associated with a first priority, the method comprising:

 sending requests from a first node to the network computing system to discover other nodes within the network computing system, wherein the first node contains a first subnet manager having a first priority;

 responsive to receiving a response to one of the requests from ~~another~~ a second node within the network computing system, wherein the second node within the network computing system contains a second subnet manager having a second priority;

 identifying a comparing the second priority from the request to the first priority;

 shifting the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the second priority is higher than the first priority; and

 shifting the first subnet manager to a master mode if no response is received from any node containing a subnet manager having a priority higher than the first priority and if ~~all nodes in the network have been discovered~~ discovery of the other nodes within the network computing system is complete.

2. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the first node is associated with a first unique value and wherein the response includes second node is associated with a second unique value for the another node and, the method further comprising:

 comparing the first unique value to the second unique value if the first priority is equal to the second priority; and

 shifting the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the first unique value identify is less than the second unique value.

3. (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein the first unique value and the second unique value are globally unique identifiers.

4. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the network computing system is a system area network.

5. (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the requests are system management packets.

6. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 further comprising:

polling ~~[[the]]~~ a master subnet manager in the network computing system in response to the first subnet manager shifting to a standby mode.

7. (Original): The method of claim 6, wherein the polling occurs periodically.

8. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 6 further comprising:

reinitiating the steps of sending, ~~identifying~~ receiving, comparing, shifting to a standby mode, and shifting to a master mode if a response to polling of the master subnet manager is absent.

9. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 8, wherein the response to polling of the master subnet manager is considered absent if a response is not received from the master subnet manager within a selected period of time and commensurate to the poll operation not completing after the poll operation has been retried a predetermined number of times.

10. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the steps of sending, identifying receiving, comparing, shifting to a standby mode, and shifting to a master mode are initiated prior to initialization of an operating system for the first node.

11. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising:

shifting the first subnet manager from ~~[[the]]~~ master node mode into ~~[[the]]~~ standby node mode in response to receiving a message to handover mastership of the network computing system.

12. (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, further comprising:

shifting the first subnet manager to a non-active mode from the standby mode in response to receiving a message to shift to ~~[[the]]~~ non-active mode from ~~[[the]]~~ a master subnet manager.

13. (Currently Amended): A data processing system in a first node comprising:

a bus system;

a host channel adapter connected to the bus system, wherein the host channel adapter provides a communications link to a network computing system;

a memory including a set of instructions connected to the bus system; and

a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to send requests from a first node to the network computing system to discover other nodes within the network computing system, wherein the first node contains a first subnet manager having a first priority; receive a response to one of the requests from a second node within the network computing system, wherein the second node within the network computing system contains a second subnet manager having a second priority; identify a compare the second priority from the request in response to one of the requests from another node within the network computing system to the first priority; shift the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the second priority is higher than the first priority; and shift the first subnet manager to a master mode if no response is received from any node containing a subnet manager having a priority higher than the first priority and if all nodes in the network have been discovered discovery of the other nodes within the network computing system is complete.

14. (Currently Amended): The data processing system of claim 13, wherein the first node is associated with a first globally unique identification and wherein the second node is associated with a second globally unique identification and wherein if the data processing system first node has an equal priority as compared to a highest priority received from another any other node in the network computing system, the processing unit compares [[a]] the first globally unique identification from a request of the another node to [[a]] the

second globally unique identification for the data processing system to determine whether to shift into a master mode.

15. (Currently Amended): A network computing system comprising:

 fabric, wherein the fabric facilitates transfer of data; and

 a plurality of nodes connected to the fabric, wherein a first node within the plurality of nodes contains a first subnet manager that has a first priority and sends requests to discover other nodes within the network computing system, receives a response to one of the requests from a second node containing a second subnet manager that has a second priority, identifies a comparing the second priority from the request in response to receiving a response to one of the requests from another node within the network computing system to the first priority, shifts the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the second priority is higher than the first priority node, and shifts the first subnet manager to a master mode if all nodes have been discovered discovery of the other nodes within the network computing system is complete and a response containing a subnet manager having a priority higher than the first priority the node is absent in responses received by the node.

16. (Currently Amended): A network computing system An apparatus for selecting a master subnet manager, wherein the node is associated with a first priority the apparatus comprising:

sending means for sending requests from a first node to the network computing system to discover other nodes within the network computing system, wherein the first node contains a first subnet manager having a first priority;

identifying means, responsive to receipt means for receiving a response to one of the requests from another a second node within the network computing system, wherein the second node within the network computing system contains a second subnet manager having a second priority;

comparison means for identifying a comparing the second priority from the request to the first priority;

first shifting means for shifting the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the second priority is higher than the first priority; and

second shifting means for shifting the first subnet manager to a master mode if [[a]] no response is received from any node containing a subnet manager having a priority higher than the first priority is absent in responses received by the node and if all nodes in the network have been discovered discovery of the other nodes within the network computing system is complete.

17. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 16, wherein the first node is associated with a first unique value and wherein the response includes second node is associated with a second unique value for the another node and, the method further comprising:

comparing means for comparing the first unique value to the second unique value if the first priority is equal to the second priority; and

third shifting means for shifting the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the first unique value identify is less than the second unique value.

18. (Original): The network computing system of claim 17, wherein the first unique value and the second unique value are globally unique identifiers.

19. (Original): The network computing system of claim 16, wherein the network computing system is a system area network.

20. (Original): The network computing system of claim 16, wherein the requests are system management packets.

21. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 16 further comprising:

polling means for polling [[the]] a master subnet manager in the network computing system in response to the first node shifting to a standby mode.

22. (Original): The network computing system of claim 21, wherein the polling occurs periodically.

23. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 21 further comprising:

reinitiating means for reinitiating the sending means, receipt means, identifying comparison means, first shifting means, and second shifting means if a response to polling of the master is absent.

24. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 23, wherein the response to polling of the master subnet manager is considered absent if a response is not received from the master subnet manager within a selected period of time and commensurate to the poll operation not completing after the poll operation has been retried a predetermined number of times.

25. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 16, wherein the sending means, receipt means, identifying comparison means, first shifting means, and second shifting means are initiated prior to initialization of an operating system for the first node.

26. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 16, further comprising:

third shifting means from for shifting the first subnet manager from [[the]] master node mode into [[the]] standby node mode in response to receiving a message to handover mastership of the network computing system.

27. (Currently Amended): The network computing system of claim 16, further comprising:

third shifting means for shifting the first subnet manager to [[a]] non-active mode from [[the]] standby mode in response to receiving a message to shift to [[the]] non-active mode from [[the]] a master subnet manager.

28. (Currently Amended): A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a first node within network computing system for selecting a master subnet manager, wherein the node is associated with a first priority, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for sending requests from the first node to the network computing system to discover other nodes within the network computing system, wherein the first node contains a first subnet manager having a first priority;

second instructions for responsive to receiving a response to one of the requests from another a second node within the network computing system, wherein the second node contains a second subnet manager having a second priority;

third instructions for identifying a comparing the second priority from the request to the first priority;

third fourth instructions for shifting the first subnet manager to a standby mode if the second priority is higher than the first priority; and

fourth fifth instructions for shifting the first subnet manager to a master mode if [(a)] no response is received from any node containing a subnet manager having a priority higher than the first priority is absent in responses received by the node and if all the nodes have been discovered discovery of the other nodes within the network computing system is complete.